

Abraham Lincoln: Great Learner and Great Leader

Abraham Lincoln is remembered as one of our country's greatest leaders. We remember him for the important things he did as President. He led our country through a difficult war, the American Civil War. He signed the Emancipation Proclamation, which freed enslaved people in the rebelling states.

We also remember him as one of our country's greatest learners. Lincoln was born in a one room log cabin in the woods of Kentucky. Through his own hard work and determination as a learner, he grew up to be one of our country's greatest leaders. When he signed the Emancipation Proclamation, Lincoln wanted to make sure that all Americans would be free to achieve great things as he had.

Abraham the Learner

In Kentucky, Abraham Lincoln went to school for the very first time. Most of the year, Abraham was too busy helping with chores on the farm to go to school as much as children do today. During a few months in the winter, Abraham and his sister Sarah learned basic reading, writing and ciphering to the rule of three. His first school was called a "blab school" and it was very different from today's schools. Instead of writing down what they had learned, they "blabbed" their lessons out loud all at the same time! Abraham loved going to school and wished he could spend more time learning and less time doing chores on the farm.

When Abraham was seven years old his family packed up and moved to the new frontier of Indiana. Two years after the Lincoln family settled in Indiana, Abraham's mother Nancy died from a illness called milk sickness. Abraham was only nine years old.

After his mother's death, his father went back to Kentucky to find a new wife. To Abraham's delight, his new step-mother, Sarah Bush Johnston, brought with her a collection of books. Once he finished reading his step-mother's books, he would walk miles to borrow more. He stayed up late at night to read them after he finished his chores.

In Indiana Abraham spent his time writing and doing arithmetic between chores. Sometimes he was known to stuff a book into his shirt before going to work in the field. He read all kinds of books: great stories, biographies, and the family Bible. He learned about the founding of our country by reading the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. The more he read, the more Abraham learned how powerful words could be.

When Abraham was grown, his family moved to Illinois. After he helped his family settle in, he set out on his own. He worked at several different jobs over the years. He was a boatman, postmaster, storekeeper, land surveyor and soldier. Abraham never forgot the power of words. He began to study law, because he understood that words could mean the difference between putting a man in jail and setting him free. It was then that

Abraham Lincoln the great learner began to develop into Abraham Lincoln the great leader.

Abraham the Leader

As a leader, Lincoln believed in uniting our country and keeping the states together. After practicing law for a while, Abraham began to take an interest in politics. The Northern and Southern states were becoming more and more divided about the best way to run our country. One of the key issues was slavery. Abraham was opposed to slavery. He was elected as a United States congressman from Illinois. Many people looked up to Abraham because of his captivating way with words. All those years spent reading and memorizing passages gave Abraham the power to change the way people thought.

Finally, in 1860, Abraham Lincoln was elected President. As soon as he took office, he was faced with the greatest crisis in our country's history: the American Civil War. The Southern States and the Northern States had finally become so divided that the South broke away from the North and formed a new country, the Confederate States of America. Lincoln believed that the North and South should stay together as one country. During the long hard war, Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation, freeing enslaved people in the rebelling states. Finally, Lincoln led the North to victory and brought our country back together again.

As a learner, Abraham Lincoln read about people like founding fathers standing by what they believed in and achieving great things. As a leader, Abraham Lincoln became one of those people. He believed so much in what the founding fathers had accomplished that he did everything in his power to make sure our country stayed together. Today we remember him as a great leader and a great learner who made sure that our country would always provide opportunities for future leaders and learners just like you.